News-Pages of the GSWC

The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan, Inc. 3 April 2018
To Accompany *Family History Capers* Vol. 41, No. 3

GSWC Meetings are held at 1:30 p.m. at the Education Center Auditorium, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Campus, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan, usually the fourth Sunday of the month, September to May.

Upcoming Meetings Spring, 2018:

Sunday, April 22, 2018: "Demystifying Michigan Court Records" presented by Jessica Harden, archivist at the Archives of Michigan.
Class: "Ypsilanti Court Records" by Marcia McCrary.

Sunday, May 20, 2018: "Inspiring Children to Genealogy" presented by Lori Fox.
Class: "There are no Dumb Questions in Genealogy" by a GSWC panel.

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Report on Recent Meetings:
January 28, 2018: **"Michigan's US-12 Heritage Trail: America's Second Federal Highway"** presented by Susan Kosky and Gladys Saborio. The presenters gave an overview of their book*: Michigan's US-12 Heritage Trail*. The road runs from Lake Erie to Lake Michigan and the designation process took 8 years. It took them another 12 years to write the book.

The book provides information about the geography of the road, settlement patterns, place names, and architecture. Sources of information they used include census records, death and marriage records, and old newspapers.

Several factors affected the development of the US-12 Heritage Trail, including Native Americans, the French and the British. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 allowed settlers to journey easily to Michigan from New England and New York.

Other topics covered were construction materials, architectural styles, demand for land, Underground Railroad activity, and alternate methods of transportation.

Class: "Your Ancestors in the County Courthouse" by John Philip Colletta from his DVD on *Discovering Your Roots*: *An Introduction to Genealogy.* He used his court research on his Ring ancestors for some of the examples—their story is told in his book *Only a Few Bones*.

Areas in the court house:

- **Land Records**—including purchase, or sale of land.
- **Court Records**—such as court dockets, include the agenda of county meetings, court minutes, case files (the initial complaint and testimony), and orders.
- **Vital Records**—birth, marriage, death and divorce (sometimes these are found in the chancery court records.)

Types of courts which may contain records for genealogy researchers are: circuit, probate, and chancery which handled adoption, wills and probate.

Be sure to check state archives websites**;** Ancestry's *Red Book* or Everton's *The Handybook for Genealogists: United States of America*; FamilySearch.org; and USGenWeb.org.

February 25, 2018: "New York City and State Vital Records and Alternates" presented by Jane E. Wilcox, via a webinar. Navigating New York vital records can be very challenging for a genealogist. You need to make sure that you have looked in every possible place.

It is important to understand the different government jurisdictions in New York: state, counties, incorporated villages and cities, towns, and New York City (which handles records differently from the rest of the state.) In 1898 five counties were consolidated to make up New York City.

Ms. Wilcox pointed out various key dates, events and laws for New York. The date of 1850 is especially significant because there are few vital records before that date.

She also discussed alternatives to vital records. These include the following: almshouses/poorhouses, Bibles, cemeteries, church records, city/farm directories, civil authorities, and DAR genealogical records.

Ms. Wilcox emphasized the importance of thinking outside the box. Her website is: http://www.4getmenotancestry.com.

Class: Panel on New York Research:
Barbara Giezentaner spoke about the Old Fulton Post Cards website: http://www.fultonhistory.com. Click on the phrase: "Go and Search My Archives".

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It was created by Tom Tryniski as a place to find old postcards, but has grown to cover many more items, especially New York newspapers. It includes items from most of the United States and some of Canada.

See the FamilySearch Wiki for more information: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Old_Fulton_NY_Post_Cards.

There are 41 million plus pages on this site. Barbara suggested that in the settings you can select the number of entries that will be shown per page (from 25 to 1000.) You can also use Boolean logic to enter search terms, and set the fuzziness level.

Additionally, she spoke about the Buffalo Library website which she finds to be very helpful with her family research: http://www.buffalolib.org. The Grosvenor Room, located in Buffalo's Central Library, has finding aides, city directories, Erie County Courthouse ledgers, scrapbooks, and other items.

Dolores Kingston talked about the New York City Municipal Archives which is on Chambers Street, and is easily accessible from the Manhattan subway. She suggested that you call first to be sure they will be open when you plan to visit, (212)788-8609.

You cannot take pictures. If you would like a copy of a record you will need to fill out a form and if they can't get the copy made before you leave they will mail it to you for $11.

They have bride and groom indexes which may help you. For example, the groom index has only the groom's name, the date of the marriage and the certificate number. You will need to cross check for the bride's name to be sure you have the correct person.

It is most helpful if you can locate the CERTIFICATE NUMBER before you go. You can use familysearch.org for this. The records are arranged by borough, and the more recent items are at the Department of Health.

The DOH will ask you to prove how you are related to the person for some of the certificates.

Additional suggestions: expect little help; try to find the certificate before it is too late in the day. They also have some land records.

Carolyn Griffin spoke on "Tracing Your New York Connection." She mentioned the federal census for 1850 is the first to list the names of family members, instead of just the head of household. New York STATE census records are available for most counties for the years: 1845, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915, and 1925. Pension records are also a good source.

Always check for county formation dates and boundary changes to be sure you are looking in the correct place, and use reference material, such as *The Handybook for Genealogists: United States of America*, to see what items particular county courthouses hold.

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Report from the GSWC Nominating Committee: At the **May 20, 2018 Annual Meeting** we will present the following slate.

Term of office July 2018–June 2020:

President: Marcia McCrary
1st Vice President: Tim Salatin
Corresponding Secretary: Rob Steward
At-Large Board Members: Royla Furniss, Carolyn Griffin and Nancy Howard

The other half of the Board was elected last year for a two-year term. Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting.

We will also be voting on the proposed Nominating Committee for next year: **Barbara Giezentaner, Royla Furniss and Linda Williams**.

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The next meeting of the **DNA Special Interest Group** will be Thursday, April 19, from 3-5 p.m., Saline Library. Contact GSWC member Rodger Wolf rawolf@umich.edu.

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In April we will begin membership renewals. Please note that we have reduced our membership categories to two: General Membership at $15, and Sustaining Membership at $25. Both allow for up to four members at one mailing address.

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The **National Genealogical Society Conference** will be held in Grand Rapids at Devos Place from May 3–5, 2018. You will find lots of inspiration for your research. For more information see: http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org.

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